Socialist Worker

BANKS STRIKE SPECIAL No.2 10/4/92

SOLIDARITY

THE banks workers are getting a wave of sympathy from Irish trade unionists.

Workers are not going to stand aside and see a miners-style defeat inflicted on a major union.

■ *At the International Financial Services Centre site, An Post workers refused to pass the picket lines to deliver mail.*

■ *Building workers refused to work on the AIB site at the centre.*

The basic spirit of trade unionism is returning.An injury to one is an injury to all.

Stop union-busting in the banks!

THE big banks are out to break their staff union, the IBOA. They want to be able to drive down wages and impose longer hours.

That way they hope to make big profits from cheap labour.

Maggie Thatcher has left the political scene in Britain. But the bank bosses believe that they can re-create her spirit in Ireland.

Over the last few weeks, the banks have ***TALKED*** about 'integrity' but have ***ACTED*** like bullies. They have engaged in wholesale intimidation:

■ Staff in the Bank of Ireland have been presented with a William Martin Murphy style letter which demanded that they sign away their union rights. When they refused, they were suspended.

■ Staff who have loans taken out from the banks have been told that they will be forced to pay commercial interest rates on those loans if they go on strike.

■ People who were looking to buy a house have been told they will not get a house loan from the banks if they stick with the union.

■ Hundreds of temporary workers have been hauled before the managers and told that they will not be taken back if they go with the IBOA.

■ People who have opted for voluntary redundancy

Transfers

or early retirement have been told that their payments will be cut back.

■ Strong hints are made that loyal union activists could face transfers after the ending of the strike.

BANKWORKERS TODAY MUST BE ABLE TO DO TWO THINGS
HANDLE EXTREMELY LARGE AMOUNTS OF MONEY—
AND LIVE ON EXTREMELY SMALL ONES

To enforce these tactics the management have engaged in the most disgraceful pressure.

On the Friday before the strike began many workers were brought in individually to their managements and told to make a choice. No IBOA representative was allowed to be present.

These tactics have been sanctioned by the supposedly neutral Labour Court.

Management have also taken to telephoning people at home. They are having long chats guaranteeing people lifts to scab and the prospect of secure promotion in the banks.

Reports

Before the strike began there were reports from around the country of people being reduced to tears by these bully-boy tactics. Some have been reluctantly pressurised by management to go to work.

Others are plain scabs who would walk over their grannies to get on side with management.

But the vast majority of the IBOA have stood firm. The banks may want to live out their Thatcherite fantasies. But strong union organisation can drive them back.

HOW BANK WORKERS CAN WIN!

THE IBOA can win this strike if the action is stepped up. Over the next few days the IBOA has to start acting as tough as the bank bosses.

What we need is:

■ *ANTI-SCAB PICKETING:* A small number of hard scabs have passed the pickets. Many more have been intimidated by management.

The union must counter this by approaching everyone who wants to pass a picket to argue with them.

Advised

It is not enough just to take the names of the scabs. People have to know that scabbing means being driven out of the union. They should be told that it means isolation from their workmates afterwards.

Banks customers should asked not go go in. Pickets have been advised to take a softly softly approach to customers. But they need a proper leaflet that explain their side of the case and argues with people not to pass pickets.

■ *PULL OUT THE SECURITY STAFF:* The banks can operate only if the security staff are in place.

They have their cash delivered by Securicor, Brinksmat, and Group 4. Most of these workers are in SIPTU. The bank porters are also in SIPTU.

The ICTU has said that it does not want to stand aside and let the IBOA be broken. It can help now by instructing these workers to respect the pickets.

The IBOA should immediately issue an open appeal to these workers. The vast majority have no desire to break the pickets.

To do this effectively, the IBOA should make it clear that it is going to joining the wider trade union movement by taking up membership of the ICTU.

■ *CLOSE THE COMPUTER CENTRES:* 70% of the workers in the AIB computer centre have come out. But in the Bank of Ireland computer centre in Cabinteely management have had a long term strategy of buying off the computer staff.

The computer staff are a key group.The banks cannot function if they are closed down.

The IBOA should organise mass pickets outside these centres, Bus loads of IBOA members should be sent out to hold strong pickets there.

■ *REGULAR MEETINGS:* The strike may be a long strike. Management will hope that some of the pickets get demoralised and start coming back to work. They hope that this will lead to the break up of the IBOA.

Morale

It is vital that the morale is kept up by everyone being involved in the strike. There should be regular metings to do this.

Meetings are also vital to get the feeling of the rank and file. Many bank workers were surprised to hear on the day before the strike began that the IBOA leadership were prepared to work on the Labour Court recommendation. Regular meeting will ensure that the rank and file are fully consulted.

■ *COLLECTIONS:* Many strikers will face real hardship after the first week of the strike. It is vital that they are not starved back to work.

Every bank should approach local trade unionists in their area for regular collections to support the strike.

The races of Castlebar

THE flying squad was sent out. The scab force of crawlers left Allied Irish Bank Headquarters at the break of dawn.

Destination: Castlebar.

A spot of bother to sort out there. Seems that too many were sticking with the unions.

Mission: Put the natives in their box by getting the bank open.

Method: Intimidate themselves with a good, well-elocuted Dublin 4 accent.

Brimming with confidence and hype, our brave scab band set out.

Imagine their horror when bank workers from other banks turned up for a mass picket.

One hundred people stick on a lively mass pickets.

Management scabs are driven out of town. The Races of Castebar 1992 sees a whole scale retreat from the AIB scabs.

A Bosses' Offensive

IRISH workers are facing a major bosses offensive.

The employers want to use the recession to break the back of our unions.

■ In the Eastern Health Board, management have tried to tear up a long established sick pay scheme.

■ In Waterford Glass, the bosses are getting ready for a new wave of redundancies.

■ IN Dublin docks, workers have been sacked because they did not bow the knee to the bosses.

■ In the buses the bosses want to bring in a new grade of 'yellow pack' workers on cheap wages.

Capitalism is a system that tramples on workers rights.

After the fall of the horrible regimes of Eastern Europe, the defenders of capitalism told us that we were living in the best of world.

Now thousands of workers want to see an alternative to both the private capitalism of the West and the tyranny of state capitalism in the East.

The Socialist Workers Movement exists to fight for a form of socialism that is built on democracy and workers rights.

If you want to know more about our policies fill in the coupon below.

If you would like to join the SWM or want more details, complete and send to:
SWM PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

☐ *Please send me more details of SWM*
☐ *I want to join the SWM*

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